

Information on Compression Stockings and Garments

What are Compression Stockings?

Compression stockings are used to aid in the healing and prevention of vascular diseases such as, ulcers and varicose veins, and reduce swelling and redness for lymphoedema patients.

What is Compression?

Compression in the stockings is measured by mmHg and categorised by class. There are usually 4 classes of stockings.

Anti-embolism: 15—20 mmHg

Class 1: 20—29 mmHg

Class 2: 30—39mmHg

Class 3: 40—45mmHg

Class 4: + 48mmHg

Class one and two are worn by people every day. Class 3 and 4 are usually for chronic patients with venous deficiency or lymphoedema and require a referral from a doctor.



How do compression stockings work?

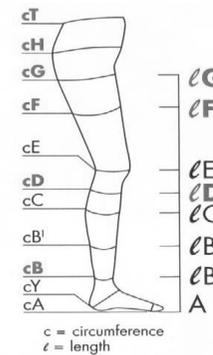
Compression garments work by improving blood flow in the ankle and lower leg. Gravity and weak veins are the main factor in ach-

ing legs and varicose veins. Having the blood flow strengthened in the legs means varicose veins, inflammation and other vascular diseases are reduced.

Measuring Stockings

Each pair of stockings needs to be measured specifically for each patient. It is recommended that you are measured for stockings early in the morning before swelling occurs.

Measurements for a below the knee need to be taken at the ankle (cB), just below the knee (cD) and the length from the floor to the inside of the knee (lD). Similar measurements need to be made for other garments, as demonstrated on the diagram to the right.



Type

There are 5 main types of stockings for legs. The type of stocking needed depends on each individual case.



Below knee (A-D)



Thigh (A-F)



Thigh with waist belt (A-G)



Panty (A-T)



Maternity Panty (A-T)

How to use compression stockings

Compression garments should be used for many different vascular diseases as a healing and preventative measure. As a preventative measure compression stockings can be used for varicose veins and spider veins.

Compression stockings should only be used during the day and not at night, especially when you are sitting or standing for extended periods of time.

Wash your stockings in a delicates bag or on a light wash to maintain the compression in them. Do not dry clean, put in the dryer or hang in direct sunlight.

Compression will only last six months in each pair of stockings, after that time it will start to become ineffective.

Use for Varicose Veins

If compression Class 1 stockings are used for aching legs or visual veins this can drastically reduce the need for surgery in future years.

Use for Ulcers

Ulcers benefit from increased blood flow for healing and further prevention. When you have an ulcer a cotton liner should be applied underneath the stocking to alleviate movement. A small dressing should be applied to cover the open wound before the cotton lining is put on over the dressing.

Maternity Stockings

During pregnancy, compression stockings can be worn to reduce the effect on veins on the legs and stomach. Often the effects of maternity do not show until a few years after.

After surgery

If you have had surgery it is recommended you wear anti-embolism stockings (AES), sometimes know as TED's, are worn for up to 2—4 weeks after surgery. AES should be worn day and night for the first week, then only during the day. It will be determined how long to wear the stockings at your follow-up appointment. In some cases a class 1 or 2 stocking should be worn afterwards, particularly for varicose vein surgery to ensure the best result from surgery.



Putting stockings on

Compression garments can be difficult to put on as a result of

pain in the leg, open wounds and pressure on swelling in the leg. They can be uncomfortable, and feel tight for the first two weeks of wearing them, this is completely normal.

Compression garment gloves must be used at all times when putting on or taking off stockings.

Keep the stocking flat, do not roll up to put on. Rolling the stockings will increase the compression and make them very difficult to move. Make sure the leg is clean and dry before putting stockings on.

A donner helps in putting on and taking off stockings by holding the stocking and releasing the pressure. The handles allow patients to pull the stocking on without having to bend down or put strain on fingers.



The Foot slip is a soft smooth material that allows the stockings to slide over the foot and ankle much easier. As shown in the picture to the left.

Cotton underlay is used for patients with allergies and sensitive skin. Made from 100% cotton also allows the leg to breathe in warmer weather.

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